

Art Front

December, 1937

15c



The Race: ELIZABETH OLDS

Courtesy Federal Art Project

Politics and Art in Modern China

By Arno L. Bader

The Graphic Project: Revival in Print Making

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8239 — An Editorial

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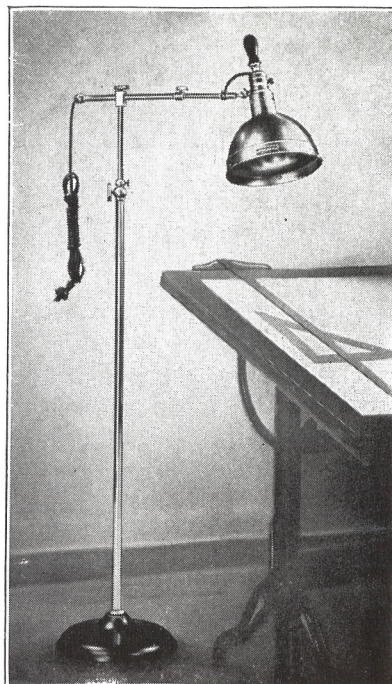
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H. R. 8239 — An Editorial

Our recent declaration that we are going to fight for the Federal Arts Bill was a terse indication of perspective for the coming months. Those who are acquainted with the history of the Artists Union will know that we have for a long time projected the idea of a democratic culture for America. In the youthful period of union development this took the form of working for the establishment of a Federal Art Project—the first significant step towards a broad cultural program—and of stimulating the growth of this project in size, quality of production, and scope of public service. With its attainment to maturity the Artists Union put forth the program of the Public Use of Art, a program which recognized on the one hand the great need of the people for wider enjoyment of cultural benefits, and on the other hand the fundamental affinity of interest between the people and workers in the arts, upon the basis of which common interest concrete steps could be taken toward the establishment of a broad popular culture. With this orientation the Artists Union, through its Public Use of Art Committee, has gone directly to hundreds of people in neighborhood clubs, settlement houses, trade unions and other organizations with the offer of exhibition and other services available through the Federal Art Project. On the basis of the immediate and warm popular response that was forthcoming the committee convinced the project administration that these services could be vastly extended, with the result that new thousands have been added to the audience reached by project artists.

The Federal Arts Bill marks the beginning of a new and more advanced phase of the program for a democratic American culture. First and foremost, it constitutes a succinct crystallization of the program into a form around which wide popular support can be centered and ultimate success can be attained: an Act introduced into Congress. Secondly, it places the program on a national basis, so that not merely a few scattered “centers” but all communities in the country, large or small, shall be enabled to develop their latent artistic talents and enjoy the opportunities for cultural enrichment so long denied them. Thirdly, whereas the Public Use of Art program has until now been a development within only one field of art, that of the plastic arts, the bill provides for similar popular extension of services in the other arts—music, literature, dance, theatre.

Enactment of the Federal Arts Bill will thus provide the machinery, the wheels and gears which are the necessary inner nucleus around which can be built a wide public culture. The workers in the several arts and the great lay public, all those who have so much to gain from such a culture, must set the wheels and gears into motion. But not only this. With respect to the workers in the arts, the Bill substantially provides for a transfer of functions from the existing Federal projects to a central Federal Bureau of Fine Arts. It lays the basis for the correction of the ever-present uncertainty of tenure and the other abuses both economic and creative (which are not few) that mar the functioning of all the arts projects as at present constituted. The degree of improvement

Second Artists Congress

To focus public attention on the role of the artist in the struggle against rising Fascist encroachments on the lives of the democratic peoples, now threatening the peace of the whole world, and to emphasize that the creative freedom of every single artist throughout the world is at stake in this crisis, Pablo Picasso, foremost living painter, has been invited to come to New York to speak at the opening of the Second American Artists' Congress in Carnegie Hall on the evening of December 17.

Picasso has been asked to appear not only as a representative artist, but to rally greater American support for the Spanish Loyalist Government, of which he has been a firm adherent ever since the fascist attack began in Spain. Soon after the outbreak of the conflict the Government honored Picasso with the post of director of the Prado Museum, which he accepted. More recently he has made stinging attacks upon Franco both in his work and through public statements.

Another international figure invited to appear on the platform is Mayor La Guardia, whose sharp denunciations of the Nazis have swept through the press of the world.

American artists who will be heard that eve-

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ning are Rockwell Kent, who recently created a stir throughout the country when it was discovered that his Washington Post Office murals contained a call for the liberation of the oppressed Puerto Rican people; Max Weber, National Chairman of the Artists Congress, and George Biddle, Vice-Chairman.

The scope and character of the program as now planned for the public meeting indicates that the affair will be of even greater import and will attract still more attention than the highly successful first congress which opened in Town Hall in February, 1936.

The basis for this confidence lies in the increased strength of the organization, manifest in the growth of the membership from 400 in 1936 to 700 at the present time, in the establishment of local units in many cities throughout the country, and in the prestige built up through cultural activities such as exhibitions, publications and symposia, undertaken in all the branches in accordance with a program formulated under guidance of the Central Executive Board.

Tickets for the public session are now on sale at the office of the American Artists Congress, 100 West 13th Street, New York City.

A program of closed sessions is also being prepared, details of which will be announced at a later date.

ARTISTS CONGRESS NEWS

The policies of The American Artists Congress, which will hold its Second Congress in New York, December 17th, 18th and 19th, will be augmented by a National Regional Exhibition.

The Exhibition Committee has been working on plans for this exhibition since the closing of the now historic Rockefeller Center Exhibit last spring. Fundamentally the exhibition will be against War and Fascism, but its scope and character has been broadened to include social injustice and curtailment of civil liberties, both here and abroad. The title of the show "In Defense of World Democracy—Dedicated To The Peoples of Spain and China," should give to the members of the Congress a wide latitude from which to draw subject matter.

As usual, there will be no jury, and paintings, sculpture, drawings and the graphic arts will be included.

That such an exhibition is a welcome necessity at this time is shown by the favorable response of the New York membership. Approximately 200 members have already responded to the call stating their desire to participate in this show.

As it was felt that a mere dedication to the struggling peoples of Spain and China would be insufficient in itself, the committee is planning a series of offset prints to be sold in the gallery at a small cost. The money thus raised will go to Spain and China.

Another exhibit which will become a permanent annual feature of the Congress, is the "8x10" show. The object of this exhibit is to raise funds for the Exhibition Committee. It takes money to run big exhibitions and neither the dues of the Congress nor the exhibition fees are large enough to defray the expenses.

The exhibit will be small but the committee will not necessarily adhere to the "8x10" inch limit. Smaller or slightly larger works will be acceptable. The media and subject matter will be left to the artist. These works will be sold at

in these respects will depend upon the understanding and enterprise, the direct participation of the writers, musicians, dancers, artists, and theatre workers of America. With respect to the lay public the Bill affirms the fundamental principle upon which alone a culture of value can develop: art must belong to and express the needs and desires of the whole people. It lays the basis for every section of the country to participate in a national culture. A full development of the potentialities inherent in the Bill will mean that drama, music, sculpture and painting, literature, the dance, all the rich artistic products of a vast nation will be available in every town and city to community groups, women's clubs, Y.M.C.A.'s and Y.W.C.A.'s, settlement houses, to the whole host of individuals and people's organizations of this country. The degree of development of this side of the program will depend upon the extent to which the provisions and benefits of the Federal Arts Bill are popularized and the extent to which the latent understanding and enterprise of the American people are stimulated.

Although the Artists Union drafted the Bill and was instrumental in getting it introduced into Congress, it desires no hegemony over American culture—nor could such control be gained by it or any other individual organization. The Bill itself recognizes that in this epoch culture must belong equally to all the people; the Bill, and, consequently, the entire cultural program, will be put into effect only with the widest popular support. It is with this understanding that we propose that every organization in every field of the arts, and every educational, social, or cultural organization of the people, support this program which is in the realest sense their program.

We urge the widest distribution and discussion of the Federal Arts Bill. Copies may be obtained by writing to the National Steering Committee, or by securing the October ART FRONT which contains a reprint in full. The locals of the Artists Union will constitute centers for local conferences of all the arts in their respective communities, with a view to mustering the widest support. We suggest that other individuals and groups concretely plan local campaigns through organization of meetings, correspondence, interviews, and the arranging of local cultural festivals of all the arts. The goal of a free and public culture lies just before us. For our part we reaffirm that we will do our utmost to attain it.

"It Is Consistent With Democratic Government"

WHEREAS, the extension of education and culture is of vital concern to the Progressive Labor Movement and central to the realization of its aims, and

WHEREAS, for the first time in the history of the country as a result of the Federal Art Project millions of workers and their families throughout the land have received benefits of cultural enlightenment beyond an elementary education, and

WHEREAS, it is consistent with democratic government to ensure the benefits of education and cultural enlightenment to all, and

WHEREAS, the temporary and limited nature of the present program means that it is in danger of being entirely liquidated and that its benefits may be lost,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this conference declares the need for legislation by the Congress of the United States appropriating funds to create a permanent and expanded Federal Arts Program and workers' educational program.

The above resolution was passed at the C.I.O. conference, held last month in Atlantic City. The recent National Negro Congress Convention in Philadelphia also endorsed the Federal Arts Bill as it has been introduced into Congress. Both the National Negro Congress and Labor's Non-Partisan League have accepted the Federal Arts Bill as a permanent part of their legislative programs.

Politics and Art in Modern China

By Arno L. Bader

The undeclared war now raging between Japan and China in a dozen places on Chinese soil has served to give prominence to a new Chinese art, the art of political caricature. For the first time in recent history China is solidly united, and the Chinese hatred of the foreign invader, a slow-growing fire since 1919, has burst into flames of popular indignation which are mirrored in present day Chinese caricature.

In the past, caricature has never invaded the serenely formal groves of traditional Chinese painting. The forthright critical method of caricature has been alien to an ancient race given to compromise and evasion. But a modern semi-Westernized China with new problems, new ideals, has stimulated the growth of the new art. Political, social, and economic changes have undermined the old feudal civilization and its institutions. Inner turmoil, conflicting philosophies of modernism, and the constant threat of Japanese domination have provided the soil in which the new art has grown.

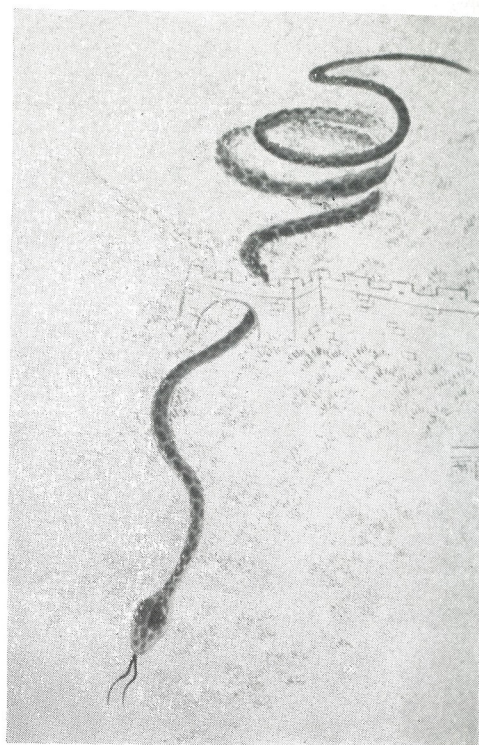
The first political caricature in China dates back to the years 1926-1928, during the period when Chinese Communists were allied with the Kuomintang. Under the guidance of the Russian Borodin and a staff of Soviet propaganda experts, Chinese artists produced caricatures and cartoons attacking foreign imperialism and foreign economic exploitation of China as well as various accompaniments of capitalism in China such as the landlord-tenant system, sweated labor in industry, and flagrant usury. The ideology, draughtsmanship, and use of crude raw color showed unmistakable Soviet influence. This early caricature, appearing as it did chiefly in the form of anonymous posters and wall paintings, was necessarily ephemeral, and, with the suppression of the Communists in 1928 by the Kuomintang, disappeared entirely.

During the last five years, however, caricature has flourished in China as a recognized art. Three small magazines are published in its interests, caricatures and cartoons have become a recognized part of Chinese periodicals and newspapers, and the winter of 1936-1937 saw the First National Exhibition of Caricatures and Cartoons which toured the large cities of China and was received everywhere with enthusiasm.

The outstanding quality of this new Chinese caricature is its subtle use of symbolism. The chief theme is, of course, hatred of Japan, but until the outbreak of the present hostilities anti-Japanese sentiment was veiled because of government censorship. The Chinese policy has been one of avoidance of war, of slow concession to the Japanese during the past years in which the nation has been united and prepared for war, and as a result extreme anti-Japanese sentiment has been taboo. Hence certain limitations were imposed upon the artists. A recognizable Japanese face was banned, and Japan and the Japanese could not be mentioned in the captions. The caricaturists rose to the occasion, for in China the indirect is by long tradition preferred to the direct, and the consequence was a series of *tours de force* in ingenious presentation of the forbidden theme in acceptable disguise.

For example, one of the most striking of the pictures shows two Chinese standing upon the balcony of an ordinary Chinese house, one with a feather in his hat and wearing huge goggles, the other dressed in old-style Chinese garments and mandarin cap of the Empire days. The title, *There Is Someone in the House*, conveys little until it is observed that the front supports to the house are a pair of Japanese sandals. Then the meaning is at once clear: The house represents Manchukuo, the man with the goggles is the puppet-Emperor Henry Pu Yi, and the sandals symbolize Japanese control. In another, an enormous snake crawls with red forked tongue extended through what is ostensibly a gate in the Great Wall of China, while behind the Wall its sinuous body coils over the land. Modern imperialist Japan is the snake, now in the act of continuing its conquest of China south of the Great Wall while behind the Wall its coils are already in possession of Manchukuo.

Another, more in the spirit of the newspaper cartoon, concerns the antics



Snaking Down: MOH YI-LUNG
Water Color

a flat price of \$10 each—divided, $\frac{1}{2}$ to the artist — $\frac{1}{2}$ to the Exhibition Committee, less a 10 per cent gallery fee.

This exhibition will be held at the A.C.A. Gallery, 52 West 8th Street, November 21st, but pictures must be at the gallery November 15th for inclusion in the catalog. There should be a wide variety of work to choose from, so, "come and get 'em" at \$10.

It is hoped that the sculptors will be on their own at last, for a sub-committee, headed by Maurice Glickman, is hard at work furthering plans for an exhibition of the works of sculptor members of the Congress. This show is scheduled for sometime in February, 1938.

Minnesota's Artists Union

The Minnesota Artists' Union is now over two years old. Perhaps you have heard of us before. Allow us to acquaint you further with our organization or maybe to dissolve certain misconceptions you may have about us.

Two years ago a group of Twin City artists happened to meet and to talk over the local art situation. We concluded that what was required was an organization of artists to fight for the artist's needs. We decided to form such an organization and to work with any other artists' organization in the country with similar aims.

From a mere handful of members, the Union rapidly expanded until it contained a good many of the practicing artists of the Twin Cities and other Minnesota towns, including many of the most prominent. We learned about the New York Artists' Union which had been in existence for about a year, communicated with them, and decided to call ourselves the Minnesota Artists' Union and to affiliate with them. Soon we heard

of other Artists' Unions springing up—in Chicago, in Cleveland, in Philadelphia, in Wisconsin, in California, etc. All these Unions were patterned after the mother Union in New York and became affiliated with it.

All were organized together on a basis of uniting every artist in the struggle for economic security and to encourage a wider distribution of art. The Unions felt that this program could not be accomplished by means of private patronage and so called upon the Government to liquidate the widespread unemployment among artists and to become an art patron itself. Through the efforts of the older Artists' Unions, the Federal Art Project was set up. Through the efforts of all the Artists' Unions, the reactionary attempts to curtail the Project were stopped until last summer, when the budget balancers succeeded in carrying through a 25 per cent nationwide reduction of the Projects.

Our Union here has had its share of struggle. Many would perhaps have preferred a different sort of artists' organization—one concerned with purely cultural pursuits. But the majority believed in linking up the artist's economic struggle with the advancement of art in general. Many would perhaps have preferred to dispense with so much W.P.A. talk at membership meetings, so much concern with fighting proposed cuts, winning better working conditions on the Project, etc. But the majority of the Union believed that the fate of the Federal Art Project was bound up with the fate of art and artists in this country. So we continued to fight for what we believed.

There were other issues that involved struggle. To begin with, our very existence as an organization of artists required constant struggle. The mere business of regularly having well attended meetings meant hard work. Such an active organization was a new idea for artists. But we kept on and during the last two years, we have held meetings regularly every two weeks except for a couple of months during one summer and we have regularly carried on many and varied activities.

The rental policy was and is a struggle. The rental policy was introduced about two years ago by the American Society of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers. It stipulates that rental fees shall be paid by museums and public institutions to artists for work shown in exhibition. We believed in the principle that the artist in contributing his best work for exhibition, merits a small fee, at least to cover expenses of exhibiting. The Unions throughout the country immediately supported the rental policy. Our Union here has had its share of struggle in the campaign to achieve rental fees. At present we are pursuing an educational policy, trying to convince as many people as possible of the necessity of paying these fees.

It has not been entirely struggle however. The Union has conducted a couple of successful exhibitions. We have sponsored a number of forums and symposia. We staged a very much publicized Surrealist Ball last winter. We have had picnics, small parties, etc.

And the activities for the coming year appear larger and more important than ever before. Chief among them is the campaign to arouse support for the Federal Arts Bill. At the last session of Congress, a bill was introduced into

of two figures, one tall and dressed in blue, the other short, clownish, and wearing red and white stripes. Reading from right to left in the Chinese fashion, we first see the figure in blue comfortably seated in the middle of a bench while the red and white figure stands disinterestedly by. The rest of the pictures depict a progressive advance on the part of the red and white figure and a constant polite retreat by the man in blue until finally the latter is entirely crowded off the bench and bows, still polite and uncomplaining, to the ground, leaving the former in complete enjoyment of his conquest. The title is *Yielding*. Blue symbolizes China, red and white Japan, and the cartoon indicates that continued Chinese concessions in the face of Japanese aggression will result ultimately in complete loss of sovereignty for China.

Another group of caricatures depicts Japanese atrocities and the ethics of "pacifying" conquered provinces. One shows a number of Chinese civilians being shot by a firing squad while photographers contort themselves in high glee at the agony of the sufferers. The soldiers of the firing squad wear no recognizable uniform, but identification as well as a keen thrust at Japanese economic penetration in North China is provided by the fact that the civilians have their backs to the Great Wall on which are two advertisements for well known Japanese nostrums, one a stomach remedy, the other a specific for restoring sexual potency. With admirable irony the artist has entitled his picture, *Sharing the Benefits of Japanese Civilization*. In another, a short, squat figure with fiendish face stands atop a pile of Chinese skulls, waving a bloody sword in triumph. The title is *Victory*, and the sword-waver wears a Japanese officer's hat.

In all of these recent caricatures symbolism and ingenuity of conception were requisites; the anti-Japanese sentiment could not appear openly. A foreigner will never cease to marvel at the carefully perfected, transparent devices of the Oriental for evading direct statement and its consequences and yet managing to convey his real beliefs. For years Chinese newspapers have referred to "a certain country" when discussing Japanese aggression against China, and

There Is
Some One in
the House:

SU CHU-WEN

Water Color



have placed quotation marks around the word Manchukuo in print in order to register a silent protest against the rape of Manchuria, while the Japanese on the other hand have insisted with humourless lack of originality that "Chinese insincerity" is at the bottom of all trouble between the two nations. The same elaborate transparency is to be perceived in the caricatures, and an interesting sidelight on the whole question is furnished by a visit of the Japanese Ambassador in Nanking to the First National Exhibition when it appeared in the Chinese capital. The Ambassador, an enthusiastic collector of Chinese painting, was escorted around the gallery by one of the artists. With scrupulous Oriental politeness, both maintained the fiction that these were merely interesting pictures representing the new Western influence in Chinese art. The question of their inner political significance was never mentioned, and when the Ambassador left he had bought several of the more obvious pictures which he most certainly did not misunderstand, and which in all likelihood reached their ultimate destination in the Japanese Foreign Office.

While all Chinese artists are united by their anti-Japanese point of view, there is another important variety of political caricature that should be mentioned here. No one interested in the subject can miss the fact that there is a strong left undercurrent in many of the pictures. This is to some extent the result of the earlier alliance between the Communists and the Kuomintang, and perhaps to a greater extent the outcome of the artists' close reading of the political testament of the Chinese leader Sun Yat-sen. Sun Yat-sen maintained a sympathetic alliance with Soviet Russia during his last years, and his political thinking of this period is strongly colored by Marxian ideology. Hence though China has moved towards the right under Chang Kai-shek, the principles of Sun Yat-sen are still in the air, especially among certain groups of intellectuals of Western outlook, and artists from these groups—usually to be found in the large cities like Shanghai, Canton and Peiping—have held up to ridicule corrupt politicians, squeezing landlords, child slavery, the foreign exploitation of Chinese labor and raw products, civil war and the institution of the warlord, and other similar shortcomings of modern China. While most of these come under the heading of social or economic abuses, the feeling at bottom is one of distinct criticism of a political system which makes these conditions possible.

Once more because of government censorship the artists were compelled to work out their ideas by indirect means. Until the recent alliance with the Communists for the purpose of making common cause against Japan, the Chinese National Government maintained a strict watch for adverse criticism from the Left, and dealt sternly with all offenders. Direct frontal attacks were therefore impossible, and the pictures achieve their ends by symbolism and suggestion.

For example, two small military gentlemen fight what seems to be a duel standing upon the prostrate body of a gigantic coolie. Neither military gentleman is wounded, but every blow falls upon the man beneath. The coolie is China bleeding beneath the civil wars of the warlords, and the artist's implication is that a true people's government would put a stop to such waste of human life and national strength. Or again, a farmer, his wife, and one small child stalk glumly along, the man holding beneath his arm a small bundle wrapped in matting. The matting covers the body of a dead baby being taken away for burial, and the emaciated condition of the one child alive tells a mute story of famine. What gives the picture point is the steeple of a Christian church in the background. Chinese Leftists regard most missionaries as the advance guard of capitalism, refer to them, in fact, as "Running dogs of the capitalists." Hence the criticism in the picture has a sharp edge: The prayers of the missionaries do not fill rice bowls; on the contrary famines are to be regarded as the result of foreign economic exploitation aided by missionaries.

Some caricaturists content themselves by pointing contrasts, as for example in the picture of a lofty, richly ornamented modern apartment house in Shanghai against which a poor coolie gatekeeper huddles with his family in a shack that would hardly serve as a respectable dog house. Others caricature but glorify outstanding liberals in the arts and politics. Lu Hsin, the acknowledged leader of modern Chinese literature who has been called "the Chinese Gorki" because his writings show a strong sympathy for the lower classes,

the House of Representatives calling for permanent government support of art. This bill has been under preparation by the various Artists' Unions for over two years. There is a very good chance for its passage and we are going to see that it receives as much backing as we can possibly secure from all people interested in art.

Likewise important on our coming year's program are plans for a Municipal Art Gallery, plans for a wider distribution of work produced on the Federal Art Project, plans for forums, symposia, parties and last, but by no means least, plans for a much larger Minnesota Artists' Union.

Provincetown Letter

The word "colony" suggests a collective. Perhaps the only recognizable collective symptom in the Provincetown art colony at this time, exclusive of the aims of the Artists and Writers Union, is a general opinion that the annual exhibition is in a state of blue funk. To this consciousness the reactionary element, sensing obvious decrease of its prestige and artificial strength, has reacted this summer in a pattern closely remindful, in miniature, of world events elsewhere.

Since the organization of the Artists and Writers Union of Provincetown, the minority element in control of the local Art Association has developed considerable nervous anxiety. It could find nothing tangible at which to point its fearful finger and its fear remained so unhappily general that, on the appearance of something tangible, it proceeded to bite off the finger entirely. A certain incident will illustrate this.

The active "conservative" element, its "brains" confined largely to one older academician, sensed a vague and general movement toward turning over the means of control and organization of the Association directly to the working artist membership as against the retention of the dying administrative and jury system (the latter hand-picked by officers, in turn hand-picked by "trustees" who were not necessarily artists, etc.).

Against this movement the reaction chose, very typically, direct action and what by analogy is "violence" in any language. They prevailed upon one of the younger reactionaries to stride into the exhibition, forcibly withdrawing his picture (against a standing rule) and releasing various declamatory and inconsistent statements to the press. These were intended as sweeping and courageous denunciations of the exhibitions as being too democratic, mediocre due to a failure to limit the showings to a very few "good," "established" artists, and so on. All this interlarded with insults and abuse.

The important point is that in each press statement released by the reactionaries an effort was made to indicate that they, the insurgents, should be regarded as having risen against an old and present policy and in favor of a "new" one—less democratic, maybe, but "better." But it soon became obvious to people that it was a NEW POLICY TREND DIFFERING FROM THE WISHES OF THE REACTION which really brought on this revolt, and it fell pitifully flat, evoking no re-

sponse, no reprisal and no comment at all at the annual meeting of the Association a few weeks later. In fact the movement toward democratic reforms, in name if not in structure, was embodied directly in amendments to the constitution and by-laws passed at that meeting.

The cultural problems of the artists of this fishing town are another matter and more difficult to cope with. For the most part the Provincetown artist takes only a superficial view of the fisherman, the backbone and the original essence of the town. Even of the few who do go to the fisherman for "material," most have yet little perception of, or identification with, the basic realities and drama of his life. In the paintings in which the fisherman or his boats and tools of work appear, it is almost always as mere appurtenances, as picturesque props and hollow manikins upon which are draped a surface of conventional ideas of design, color, romance, or purely personal statement.

It is as if we Provincetown artists in general had identified a hated state of society with people, even with those likewise oppressed; thus, in our supposed independence of the struggles of the rest of the working class, most of us seem blindly determined to avoid people beyond the most casual and superficial contact.

Emotional isolation from the living, breathing, struggling humanity of our town, and therefore of the world, seems to be the topmost psychological factor in the Provincetown artists' problem. It rests ultimately of course on the fact that there is none of the old type of market for our specialized labor in the town proper, and very little elsewhere now.

Provincetown is in effect a small company town, controlled very largely through a number of the fish-freezing plants and fishing facilities, by a private absentee corporation. Local private patronage of the arts is now practically non-existent.

Except for the Artists and Writers Union, there is no labor organization whatever. The atmosphere has been rife with a deeply injected and

appears as a coolie grasping the Soviet hammer while Gorki, also dressed like a coolie, flourishes the sickle.

More direct are the anti-Fascist caricatures which are aimed principally against Hitler and Mussolini. Representations of Hitler and Mussolini are frequently to be seen in the Chinese newspapers. One of the most striking depicts the two dictators as militant angels shaking hands in the clouds above a field strewn with bloody corpses. The recent Japanese-German accord, too, is attacked from the anti-Fascist angle.

While the ideas for many of the pictures are characteristically Chinese, the style is apt to be a recognizable imitation of that of certain Western artists. The ghosts of creations of Covarrubias, Grosz, Gropper, Cotton, Steig, Rivera, and a host of others stare out from pictures containing Chinese faces and scenes. Chinese caricaturists, it is obvious, have seen the old *Vanity Fair*, the *New Yorker*, the *New Masses*, *Esquire*, and other American periodicals. They have discarded the Chinese brush, the basis of all Chinese painting and calligraphy, and have mastered the materials and techniques of the West without as yet acquiring individual styles. Nevertheless there is life and vitality and exuberance in the work, and it should be remembered that there has not been sufficient time to develop a genuine native tradition. Caricaturists have seized the easiest and nearest means of achieving their ends, and they have produced strong work despite its imitative quality.

Since the beginning of open warfare between China and Japan one important event—the relaxation of government censorship—has occurred which may well change the peculiar quality of Chinese caricature. The lid is off and Chinese artists are free to express their indignation and that of the inarticulate masses against imperialist Japan. While the fighting was still centered in the north of China, before the spread of hostilities to Shanghai and other areas, crude but powerful posters had already made their appearance on the walls in certain sections of Peiping. Japanese soldiers appeared as ghouls in gas masks, Japanese generals feasted jovially on the tender flesh of Chinese children, and a gigantic black spider with a Japanese face entrapped the helpless Chinese fly. There was no subterfuge about these pictures. They were as outspoken as the slogans splashed on every available bit of wall: "Down with Japanese Imperialism!" and "Save China from Japanese Aggression!" When the Japanese took Peiping the first thing they did was to remove caricatures and slogans alike.

Whatever the outcome of the present war, it is certain that Chinese caricature has played and will continue to play an important role in arousing and consolidating Chinese public opinion. Traditional Chinese painting with its flowers, birds, insects, and grinning tigers, its *shan shui*—"mountain-water" pictures glorifying the serenity of nature—and its strong literary background, is after all an art of the educated, leisure classes. It fails to touch the lives of most of China's four hundred millions. The new caricature represents the masses, it has a broad appeal, and it shoulders social responsibilities which the traditional painting never conceived of. Furthermore, it is already serving as an advance guard for realistic representational painting of the Western type which to date has failed to gain a foothold in China.

Pasteur: ARTHUR FABER
Federal Art Project Mural Panel



The Graphic Project: Revival of Print Making

By Joseph Leboit and Hyman Warsager

Every outstanding American artist is being affected by the ferment in the graphic arts today. Prominent men and women have banded together in many groups to make their prints more available. The American Artists Congress has issued a volume of 100 prints—exhibited in 30 cities—on “America Today,” and artists like Benton, Davis, Curry, Kunyoshi, Soyer, Gropper, Grosz and Dehn have turned increasingly to print making.

In this revival the Federal Art Project has been a potent force. How wide a function it continues to serve, or, more important, can be made to serve, will determine the further development of this movement in the graphic arts. In the Graphic Division, which employs nationally about one-twentieth of the personnel of the entire Federal Arts Project, about 200 artists are working as print makers in New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, Colorado, and California. From one center alone, New York, 2,693 prints have already been allocated to public buildings on a 99-year loan. Many of these now hang in the city's schools, offering for the first time to thousands the opportunity to live with good art. If these prints have done nothing else but drive those old steel engravings of the Coliseum from the walls of our school corridors to a well earned rest, they have vindicated their creation.

These prints have already created a national reservoir of illustrative material for periodicals, for the print is extremely close to contemporary environment, and is an art rich in social content. There is hardly a still life or abstraction among them. Nor is all the work representational. Many of the pictures are highly imaginative, and brilliant in their use of the principles of abstract art. It would almost be possible to reconstruct the social history of our period from prints made on the project. They are a kaleidoscope of modern America. If as yet only few magazines and periodicals have reproduced them, it is because it is not yet known that they are available for the asking. The project would do well to publicize this fact.

New York, with its sixty artists, has sent the startling sum of 5,187 prints to Washington. Here, together with material submitted from other centers they are assembled in portfolios and placed in educational institutions. The remaining prints are not given much chance to collect dust either. They are subjected to a rigorous circuit of “one night stands” as they tour the country in a variety of exhibitions. Such shows were only made possible by the opening of thirty-eight Federal Art Project Galleries and Art Centers in the deep South and in the West. In turn these centers continue to organize hundreds of local exhibits. The avid public response to these exhibits emphasizes the astonishing cultural poverty of many sections of our country. Many of the residents of these states had never before seen the work of a living graphic artist—and for all that we know, of a dead one either!

Thirty-three such exhibits, showing 700 prints, were arranged in New York between the months of January and August of this year alone. Instead of holding these shows in uptown, high-hat galleries, the project took the prints directly to the audience. For the first time exhibitions were held in settlement houses, hospitals, schools, and universities. With the stimulus and assistance of the Public Use of Art Committee of the Artists Union, these shows were further extended to trade unions, which received them with enthusiasm.

The indisputable merit of the project prints was demonstrated at two important and comprehensive exhibits held in New York last year. Both presentations met with the unanimous acclaim of the art press, the New York Post

nourished fear of unionization. The church plays a considerable part in the political set-up, creating an atmosphere of fear, and tabooing every evidence of progress toward a broader culture. This is well indicated in a recent statement attributed to one of the three selectmen: “All these artists and writers should be driven out of town!”

A few months ago a gang of hoodlums, otherwise healthy youth with no real opportunities in view, were organized as a branch of the Secret Sentinels of America. They were to be supplied with secret black finger rings with white skull and bones. One of their specific tasks was to keep a close watch on the movements of two especially innocuous members of the Artists and Writers Union who, because of their prominence in the quite open activities of the Union in behalf of its members, were suspected of being the “brains behind a vast secret organization all over the country, holding secret meetings in Provincetown to plot the overthrowing of the Government of the United States!” Recruits of the Secret Sentinels were told that these two “plot-ers” were to be thrown in jail in a very short time anyway and that any Secret Sentinel who could aid the Government in their arrest and conviction would be given “a permanent Government job.” Sheer pity for the condition of mind of these idle youth, several of whom had already come close to a typical reform-school career, and a curiosity as to the reactionary forces which would ultimately be revealed behind them, restrained the slandered parties from a direct public confrontation. This gangster movement has apparently expired of its own errors and probably a lack of cash to bolster its fascistic romance.

A confused state of mind in most of the younger non-union artists makes up the present ideology of the remnants of the old colony in this very fluid stage. There is nevertheless an unavoidable breaking of the old shells, a vague surging toward new functional pathways within a structure that has for some years appeared to be something less than a corpse.

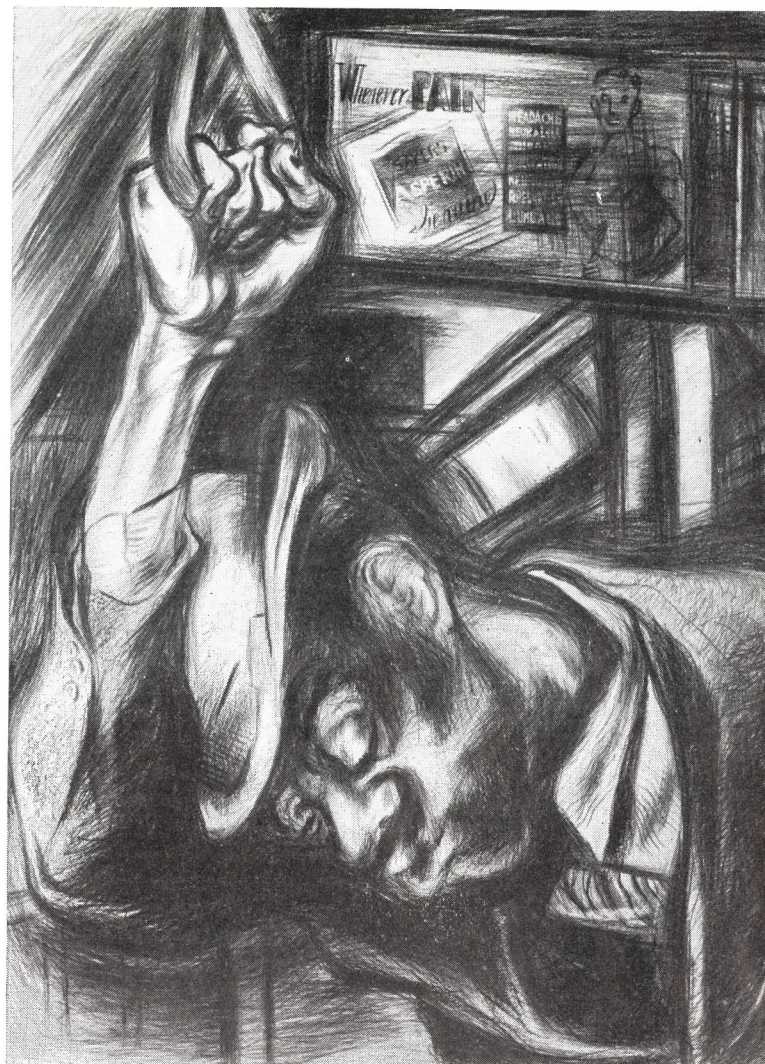
The part played by the Federal Art Projects in aiding the release of these new growths, toward a deeper usefulness for all of the people, cannot be minimized. The degree of decomposition of old forms which had been reached here is well illustrated by a proposal arising last year from the non-project wing of the “conservative” camp to the effect that the Art Association Gallery should close its doors and suspend operations for the next few seasons!

This childish proposal for solution was followed by several minor moves toward a liberalization of Association policy—the placing of a Union member as new “Director,” the granting of winter headquarters to the Union in the totally idle Gallery building, election of a somewhat more progressive “President” and other progressive steps, culminating this summer in the incident related in the beginning of this article.

As elsewhere, the only possible conclusion is that if a living art is to survive in Provincetown, all artists must continue to unite on common and specific ground over the basic problems of the whole profession. The Federal Art Projects must be continued and must be so integrated with the

Work of the Graphic Project

Riding Home: NAN LURIE



Old Docks:
CHET LA MORE
Two Color Lithograph

hailing the work as "art that deserves to go permanently to the people." "W.P.A. artists have created vigorously out of the experiences most congenial to them," the Post added. The Herald Tribune reviewer was impressed by the "careful and imaginative work and excellent technique." "Of the exhibit let it be said at once that there are some thoroughly good and robust things," the Times declared. If American graphic art compares today with the best in the world, the project artists can take pride in what, by their high level of work, they have contributed to make this true.

One of the most interesting phenomena in recent print making, has been the renewed enthusiasm on the part of artists for lithography. There can be no doubt that this interest has been quickened by the Federal Art Project. The Project has encouraged experimentation, with such exciting results that an increasing number of artists are being lured from their canvas to the lithograph stone.

Since the materials and equipment of lithography are in some ways more expensive than those of other print media, the lithographer has been seriously handicapped in the past. One can understand then, how much it means to the artist to have the project establish for his use studios where skilled men perform the necessary technical work. The New York graphic shop, for example, now has three lithographic printers. One prints black and whites, and two do color work. There is also a wood block printer, while etching proofs are pulled by Frank Nankivell.

Because of its popularity and wide handling on the project, lithography has been so greatly enriched that it again comes into its own as the most flexible of print media. The project lithographers have been highly inventive. In addition to using crayon on stone, they have, through the use of wash and touche, and supplementary aids like the razor blade, sand paper, and carborundum in varied combinations, begun to exploit the full possibilities of the lithograph stone.

The ingenuity of the project artist is forced to keep pace with his problems. In order to solve the difficulty presented by the distance between San Francisco, where the lithographs were to be printed, and the outlying centers, Sacramento and Carmel, where the drawings were done on paper, the California division made an important technical innovation in lithography last year. They worked out a revolutionary method for producing a new type of transfer paper that has the actual grain of the stone.

On the other hand, most project artists, including lithographers, have not yet creatively explored the fields of etching and wood engraving. The Graphic Craft of the New York Artists Union, alive to the value of such experimentation, held a series of meetings for project artists to which various experts were invited. In the course of these meetings, Emil Ganso explained offset soft ground etching. Professor Muller and Louis Schanker demonstrated color wood blocks, Nankivell showed many methods of aquatint, and George Miller lectured on color lithography. In spite of these stimulants to further experiment, our etchers and wood engravers still confine themselves, with too limited results, to purely conventional methods. They have neglected to develop the highly expressive methods of etching and aquatint revealed in the work of such masters as Degas, Picasso, Chagall, Braque, and Rouault, whose prints in the show, "Modern Painters as Illustrators," at the Museum of Modern Art, indicated the rich diversity of statement possible in this medium.

Our wood engravers too, have as yet failed to assimilate the splendid technical advances of such adventurers in art as the Mexican engraver Posada, as Masereel, Gauguin and Kirchner, the German expressionist. Practically all the block prints on the New York project have been printed from blocks engraved from end grain hard wood. Few of the artists have done work in the freer medium of long grain soft wood in which greater variety of size, fluidity of treatment and color can be achieved.

With certain lethargy, most of our artists have continued to work in the medium in which they began. They have not been sufficiently bold in utilizing the varied techniques which the project offers. Since lithographs, lithotints, linoleum cuts, wood engravings, wood cuts, etchings, aquatints, mezzotints, dry points, monotypes, and color lithographs, are all being done, the artist who

actual processes and accomplishments of the social changes themselves as to fulfill increasingly the vast unused or wasted expressive capacities of painting in these epochal times.

BOB ROGERS.

Open Letter to Sculptors

Fellow Sculptors:

While the work produced on the Sculptor's Project during the past year has shown development and has been generally commended, it has nonetheless failed to satisfy the sculptors themselves. They feel that the unmistakable talent of the artists does not show in their project work. One reason for this is the administration policy. There has been a tendency on the part of the administration to conform to the tastes of the directors and of the boards of the tax supported buildings who have the authority to choose project work for allocation. Instead of imposing its own standards on these people, the administration has too much accepted their artistic views, which are mainly conservative and academic. This timidity is reflected in the type of work that has been produced. The sculptors have been forced to restrict their work to themes which are almost invariably innocuous, instead of having individual freedom of expression.

Under such conditions it is necessary that the sculptors reevaluate their work, and that they reconsider their function as articulate members of society. It is their responsibility to bring to society a vital expression of their time through the medium of their art.

I do not mean this to be taken in the narrow sense that sculpture must have a "literary" social meaning. We have all seen examples of work in which the sculptor has sought to express social meaning in the limited subject of the human figure—through expressive action, pose, type. The approach to a socially conscious art must recognize the possibilities of eloquence in form, in line, in space. The problem of the artist is to be aware of the movements, the struggles of men in a changing modern world—then to express the most basic of these through utilizing the widest possibilities of his medium.

Certain sculptors, dissatisfied with a defunct realism, are attempting to express in pure form the movements, forms, and rhythms of contemporary life. If through their experimentation they reach a newer, more vital realism—excellent! But if their efforts lead toward a purely non-objective art, they will arrive at as sterile a form as the academic hypocrisy from which they originally rebelled. The need is for new forms, new symbols, and a correlation of these with the fundamental cultural needs of the people. The need is for an integrated alive MOVEMENT among sculptors to take the place of the prevalent artistic disorganization and individualism.

Primarily what is required is closer association of sculptors with each other for the purpose of cooperative exchange of ideas and cooperative research. One medium for this exchange is ART FRONT. Another is the Sculptors' Section of the Artists Union, which meets on alternate Monday evenings at 430 6th Avenue. What is also required is the willingness of the individual artist to question old values and discard outworn standards, to experiment—to PROGRESS.

H. AMBELLAN.

Correspondence

Popeye Wins a Union Label

To the Editor:

On Tuesday night, October 12th, our 21-week strike against the Fleischer Studios was ended, with the signing of a contract that is an outstanding victory for all commercial artists.

We realize that without the cooperation and aid of brother unions like your own, this victory might not have been possible. We wish, therefore, to convey to you at this time, our heartfelt gratitude for your timely assistance, and to extend to you the thanks of everyone of our 74 strikers. They are now back at work, with a 40-hour, five-day week, a 20 per cent wage increase, time and a half for overtime, paid vacations, sick leave, and many other benefits.

When you remember that these 74 young artists who fought and won this bitter six-month-long struggle were "white collar" workers who knew little or nothing about trade-unionism two weeks before they went out on strike . . . when you remember that they "stuck it out" on their picket lines from May 7th to October 12th, through one of the hottest summers on record . . . then you will understand why we are so proud of this victory.

We have already held a mass meeting at the Labor Stage on October 28 to carry on our fight against the notorious Citizens Committee of Johnstown, Pa., which recently set up offices in New York City. Because of the fact that we were the first local union to be singled out for attack by these vicious enemies of the labor movement, the powerful American League Against War and Fascism is joining us in this movement. We are making it our task to rally all white collar workers to this struggle.

Fraternally yours,

JAMES HULLEY,
President.

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Taxing the Higher Brackets

To the Editor:

Probably you have seen these things. But the young man who received this form is not only on Home Relief—\$6 and some odd cents every two weeks, and his room rent—but he stood for a week alongside his paintings, as did many others too poor or unrecognized to have gallery shows, and sold nothing.

It's like the story of the Mexican General and his tax on cats. God bless us.

D. TRUESDALE.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
Emergency Revenue Division
50 Lafayette Street
Local Law No. 20 of 1937
Misc.

Dear Sir:

The records of this office indicate that you have failed to file a return of your receipts from sales of tangible personal property in connection with the Art Exhibit held at Washington Square during the month of September, 1937.



Labor: WILL BARNETT

Federal Art Project Aquatint

does not seize the opportunity to work in other media besides the one with which he is most familiar is unwisely conservative.

It is in the field of color lithography that the graphic project is making its most conspicuous contribution. To produce black-and-white lithographs, the artist must either own a press or be able to afford to have his work printed by an expert. The difficulties involved in color lithography, however, increase manifold. The technical problems to be met in the use of two or more stones—one for each color in the work—and the great expense attached to this process, have practically prohibited individual artists from using the medium. Almost no work has been done by individuals. The only previous attempts in this country were the last of the Currier and Ives prints. Were it not for the facilities afforded by the project, the entire heritage of modern color lithography in America might have been restricted to several good prints by Ganso and Limbach, and some isolated examples by Arthur B. Davies, Rockwell Kent, Harry Gottlieb, and Ernest Fiene.

Today, however, the project artist can develop new skill and perfect his mastery of the medium. The ordinary equipment of the New York project graphic shop has provided, at practically no additional expense, the means of experimental pioneering in this popular medium. About twenty-five color lithographs have already been completed, ten of which have been sent to the Sixth International Exhibition of Lithography and Wood Engraving, opening in Chicago on November 5. Even more dramatic a development is the plan for a spring exhibition of some fifty color lithographs, the first of its kind ever to be held in the United States.

Philadelphia has carried on some interesting experiments in color lithography for posters. In New York this work is done by the silk-screen method, but in Philadelphia there has been a return to the old methods of craftsmanship—color lithography and wood-block printing. The results have been so successful that the posters in color are being preserved for their artistic merit as prints. They call to mind the fine lithographs in color that Toulouse-Lautrec first made for utilitarian purposes.

The artist, like other workers, needs the feeling of social usefulness to

sense that his creative ability is of genuine social value. This means the widest circulation of his work. On the graphic project, one of the means by which this might be done would be the use of the multilith press. The print has been called the most democratic of the arts. Its democracy lies in the ease with which it is reproduced and distributed. With the multilith, the cost of reproduction would be at a minimum. Editions of prints would no longer have to be limited to 25 or 50, but could be extended into the thousands. It would be simple to prepare, on a very wide scale, folios of prints for educational use. Several such folios have been issued privately by Don Freeman. Charlot's collection of color multilith prints, which can be seen at the Morgan Galleries, gives one a stimulating idea of what can be done with this method.

Certainly the multilith could lend itself admirably to the publication of a project magazine, to use in printing pictorial catalogues for exhibitions, to pictorial advertising for other projects,—such as the Federal Theatre—and to the publication of books. Picture books seem a natural method of justifying the existence of the project to organizations which it could serve. The project has many natural allies in the trade unions, in clubs, and in peace and social organizations. They, as yet, have derived very little concrete benefit from the Art Projects, and there is no doubt they would better defend a program which they better understood. A folio, for example, on the story of garment workers in America, would make this program a reality, would endear the project more than could reams of publicity, to such an organization as the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, a body of 225,000 people.

The field of book illustration, too, has barely been touched, and the work that the project can do here is enormous. The recent arrangement between the Writers' Project and the Art Project for a closer correlation of work, opens the way for the use of fine prints as book illustrations. When Fred Becker illustrated "John Henry" with scratchboard drawings, he indicated what could be done in this field. The attempt to illustrate the guidebook, "Italians in New York," with project prints already on file, is another approach to this idea. When this coordination program is developed, the artist will find in book illustration a broader use for his prints. A method would thereby be introduced into America which has already become a tradition in France, where as a matter of course the nation's artists are called upon to illustrate its literature. These are some of the paths the project must travel if it is to continue to grow and thereby make a permanent contribution to American culture. It need hardly be said that it must also be freed from the restrictions by which it is constantly hamstrung. Relief qualifications and technicalities of citizenship, for example, do not have the slightest relation to the production of art. Yet because of artificial restrictions of this nature some of our finest artists—people like Arnold Blanch, Hugh Miller, Fritz Eichenberg, Tamotzu, Kuniyoshi, Lois Murphy, Kyra Markham, and Raphael Soyer, to mention only graphic artists—are prevented from utilizing project facilities in making their contribution to American culture.

There is every reason to believe that the evident promise of a renaissance in the graphic arts in America will become a reality. The organized artists have been the major force in the tremendous recent progress in the plastic arts. Graphic artists can play an ever greater role in this development. Through individual and group experiment much can be done to make use of the wide possibilities in lithography, color lithography, etching and aquatint, woodblock, and the other graphic processes, touched upon above. Craft meetings in particular, since they bring together many artists with similar interests and problems, can be most fruitful in this respect. A wide field for experiment lies before the printmaker eager to broaden his power as an artist. Exploration will be to his individual benefit and mean the enrichment of American graphic art.

Stamp to Raise Funds for Spanish Loyalists: JOAN MIRO

Section 15 of Local Law No. 20 of 1937, otherwise known as the City Sales Tax Law, provides in part as follows:

"Any vendor * * * failing to file a return required by this Local Law * * * shall, in addition to the penalties herein or elsewhere prescribed, be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishment for which shall be a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment."

You are accordingly advised to file a return upon the enclosed form 12 STX and to pay the tax due thereon without further delay in order to avoid the imposition of the penalties prescribed by law.

Very truly yours,
MILTON SOLOMON,
Deputy Comptroller.

Who Killed the Home Planning Project?

To the Editor:

One phase of the "more abundant life" is about to be launched for hundreds of underprivileged families with the completion this fall of the Williamsburg Housing Project. Many square blocks of appalling slums have been wiped out from the heart of that endless, desolate forest of brick and pavement which is Williamsburg, and in the clearing have been erected modern, beautiful, functional dwellings fit for human habitation at prices workers can afford to pay. The sight of this oasis in the midst of a desert of slums is mirage-like and seemingly miraculous. But these rows of light, airy, new workers' homes are neither mirage nor miracle. Only after years of mass pressure and insistent demand on the part of workers have the first small beginnings in slum clearance and better housing been made. (But small beginnings they are—mere drops in a vast sea, for there yet remains the urgent necessity for many



additional housing projects, as is evidenced by the steadily mounting rent rates and constantly deteriorating conditions of living in countless American dwelling places, and by the existence of so many restrictions, limitations, and inadequacies in the present slum-clearance program.)

The Williamsburg Housing Project will shortly have installed on various walls of its units murals made by artists on W.P.A. (I believe every one of these artists is a member of the Artists' Union.) Practically every one of the artists has created a mural of abstract design, in keeping with the modern architectural design of the buildings.

A group of these muralists had occasion a few weeks ago to visit the site of the new Williamsburg buildings. Two or three "model apartments" had been completed, furnished, and opened for inspection. Inspect them the muralists did, and therein found the tragedy of Williamsburg. For in the unpretentious, neat, cheerful, moderate-sized rooms were stuffed the veneered slickness of the "Fake Modern" School of Furnishing, comprising a hodge-podge of satins, laces, mirrors, odd tid-bits and frostings, luscious curtains and drapes which succeeded in obstructing the light from even the expansive steel-framed modern windows (which are a universal feature in the Williamsburg Project), and, to add the final touch to the Chambers of Horrors, the most complete collection of 5 and 10 cent store prints, comprising all the well-known subjects from Moon-Girls, Bananas-and-Grapes to Beautiful-Sunsets, that an unscrupulous furniture dealer could conjure up. The atmosphere was thick with furniture salesmen and literature from a number of notorious commercial houses. On each piece was placed a tidy announcement of the price (which was invariably a neat sum), the Easy Time Payment Plan, and Please Do Not Handle.

The prospective tenants, filing by in an endless stream, observed all this glamor. It was only natural that they should assume that these "furnishings suggestions" had an official authorization, since the government had supervised all else in the project. But it seems a clean sweep of it could not be made and an otherwise quite decent job had to be climaxed with permitting the sharks and vultures—who have always followed the underprivileged—to pursue their parasitic manoeuvrings even into the healthier air of the government housing project.

It is probably too late now. No doubt the future tenants of the Williamsburg Housing Project are already caught in the usurious maze of time payment plans, and have had enough dime store prints foisted on them to go into competition with Barbara Hutton herself; at least they will have enough to perceive a most glaring discrepancy between the prints and the creative art they will find in the public rooms of their new

World's Fair Labor Pavillion

By Percival Goodman

The Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians has been promoting the idea of building a pavillion at the N. Y. Fair, "Union designed, Union financed, Union built" as an expression of organized labor.

Initially it was decided to hold a series of competitions, the first for the architectural design, followed by others for the painting, sculpture and landscape design.

The architectural competition had about fifteen designs submitted, many of which contained ideas that were considered excellent but none of which contained enough of these ideas to be acceptable. These designs without exception were submitted by individuals.

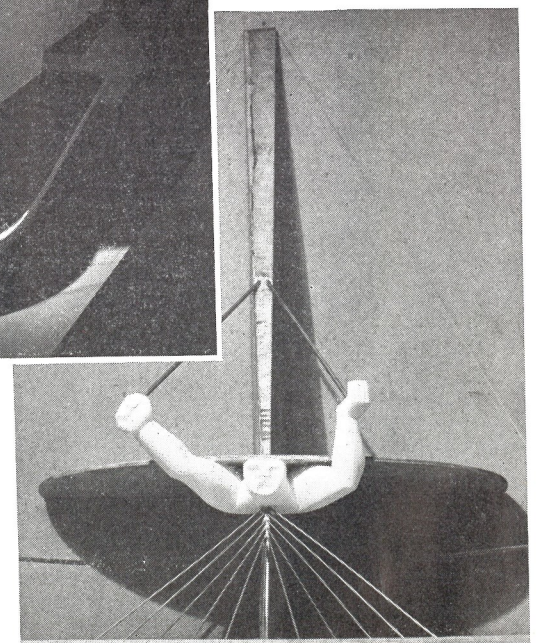
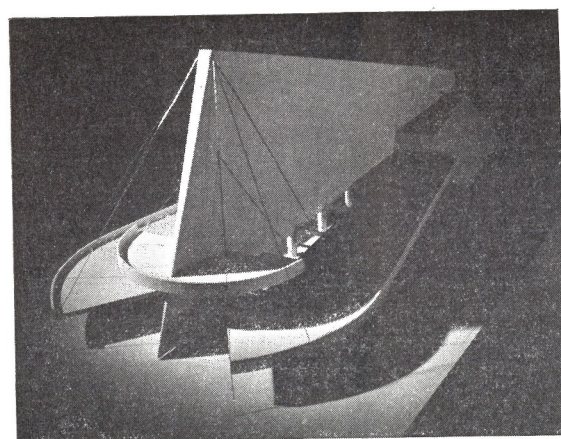
After the Competition a committee was organized to arrive collectively at a solution based on the report of the findings of the jury. Ultimately this committee evolved a program.

The program consisted of four parts. The first was that the building should be as large and as inexpensive as possible, the second, that the labor movement should be shown kinetically by means of a documentary film, and in addition by means of painting and sculpture. Thirdly, there were to be no charts, statistics or other indigestible matter as part of the exhibit. Leaflets, etc., could be distributed containing this type of material. Lastly, that the building be as open and inviting as possible, eliminating all doors and other obstructions, attempting to express on the exterior of the building the maximum amount of 'message.'

The collective working out of this program resulted in the design shown. It consists of a 'fin' over 100 feet at its highest point and over 300 feet long. On this is to be put the outdoor message, a gigantic signboard indicating in some great simple way what labor is.

At the base and surrounding the 'fin' there will be a covered area in which are set booths, small exhibitions, gardens and rest places. This area is directly open to the street, inviting the passerby to walk in its shade instead of along the hot and sunny street. Thus was eliminated the hazard of getting people to go into a building.

At the lower end of the 'fin' is a motion picture theatre in which will be seen a fifteen minute documentary film showing the history of the American labor movement from the Knights of Labor to the C.I.O. Structurally the



Collective Design for World's Fair Labor Pavillion

ISAMU NOGUCHI

Prize-winning Design for Sculpture



Stone Crusher: JOHN OPPER

Water Color, Courtesy Artists' Gallery

building is one. The great fin requires wind bracing. The auditorium and covered space require support. The cables providing the wind bracing also provide the support. Thus because it is structurally integrated the building is plastically one. (Note: the photo does not show all the cables in place).

As to the sculpture and painting designs, the architectural committee wrote a program for this part of the work of a very general nature, in order that the painters and sculptors would have complete freedom in their designs.

Two groups submitted designs: The Artists Union and the Architects, Painters and Sculptors Collaborative (who are also all members of the A. U.)

The jury consisted of four architects: Prof. Talbot Hamlin of Columbia, Frederick Kiesler, Milton Lowenthal of the Federation School, and Percival Goodman; two painters, Hugo Gellert and Philip Evergood, of the American Artists School (Rockwell Kent was invited but could not attend), one trade union official: Dr. Charles Hendley, president of the Teachers Union (three other trade union officials were invited to attend but could not. This lack was severely felt by the members of the jury).

In sculpture, the design of Isamu Noguchi of the Artists Union was placed first, it being generally agreed that it was excellent symbolically and had an organic kinship with the structure. Several of the jurymen opined that it should be made in polished metal with the bars in illuminated glass, for otherwise it might appear too heavy for the lightness of the structural forms.

Aaron Goodelman's design was placed second after several votes had been taken between its merits and that of Robert Cronbach's. The general feeling was that the sculpture was static in its conception, having no relationship (other than a sentimental one) with the architecture, and that it was symbolically lacking in expression. Cronbach's design (placed third) evoked the most discussion, all feeling that it had great popular appeal, that the mass of crane and girder was plastically excellent but that the figure of the steel worker was naturalism of the most unfortunate kind. It further was decided that it bore little relation to the architecture. The opinion of the jury was that if the building were built, Cronbach should be asked to execute the piece on a smaller scale for the interior. The other designs submitted were thought to be good but banal in their rough state.

When it came to judging the painting there was an immediate consensus that none of the works submitted took advantage of the opportunity presented. It was voted by the jury, that in fairness to the competitors an attempt should be made to get the opinion of trade union groups on the merit of the work submitted, the jury with laudable humbleness saying "perhaps artistic predilection might be affecting their judgment."

A hope was voiced that a committee, such as was set up by the architects after their competition, be set up by the painters in order to arrive at a solution which the wall and the labor movement deserves.

dwelling, which will make for confusion about a subject which is already overly confused in the minds of many. Isn't it time that American workers stopped the commercial interests from contemptuously throwing the dried bones of degenerate capitalist "culture" in their faces?

The Artists' Union can help improve the standard of artistic taste of the American worker by the use of the following measures:

1. A campaign of pressure upon the national W.P.A. for the re-creation of the recently whole-sale-pink-slipped Home Planning Bureau, whose function it was to give free aid and advice to low-income families on the artistic and economical furnishing of their homes. In Washington there is a huge housing project that was directed by Prof. Tugwell, in which the administration did not leave off with the painting of the walls but assumed the important responsibility of guiding the tenants in a decent, sensible, and economical plan of furnishing, down to the details of easel pictures and prints. This work was done, I believe, through an existing government bureau devoted to these purposes. Any such governmental agency should receive the support of the Artists' Union.

2. Collaboration of the Artists' Union with the American Artists' School, the New School for Social Research, and the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists, and Technicians to create a Home Planning Committee of their own, and, in conjunction with this, the setting up of an Artists' Union Lecture Bureau for the purpose of artistic education of occupants of housing projects. I think avenues could be opened up in this way also for the sale of art works by members of the Artists' Union at very reasonable prices to tenants of the housing projects.

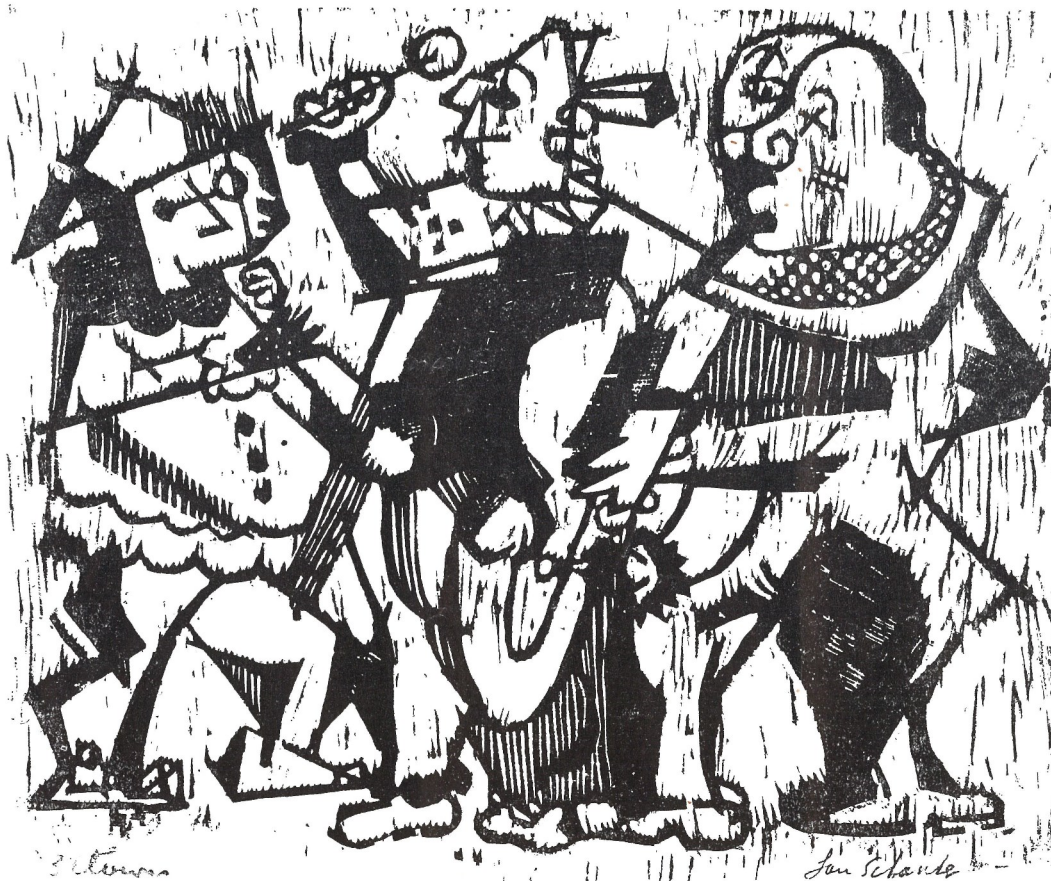
The Artists' Union has a triple right and duty to interest itself in the furtherance of better housing. As a trade union, it must be concerned with the well-being of workers and trade unionists; and slum-clearance is one of the important means of bettering the conditions of workers. Gone are the days of the "garret artist." Artists and their families are among the workers who most sorely need improved housing conditions.) Then, there is the matter of civic beauty, which it is the duty of an Artists' Union to champion and strive for; and there is no more direct road to civic beauty than the abolishment of eye-sore slums and the erection in their place of workers' homes of true modern utilitarian style. Last, there are the limitless opportunities for artists for the decoration of housing projects and for the artistic guidance of their occupants.

HANANIAH HARARI.

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Three Clowns:
LOUIS SCHANKER
Woodcut

EXHIBITIONS

INDEX OF DESIGN SHOW

A wooden cigar-store Indian was acclaimed by the critical press as the hero of an exhibition of drawings by artists of the W.P.A. Federal Art Project's Index of American Design. The drawings, forty seven in all, were shown with the original objects from which they were made, at the Downtown Gallery. However, despite the captious critics, the honors of the show could have been divided equally between the up-to-now anonymous craftsmen of the nineteenth century and the artists of the Index, whose anonymity for so long a time has been unwarranted.

The art of the common man, which the W.P.A. Federal Art Project seeks to preserve for the future in its Index of American Design, deserves a double star-billing in this exhibition. Early American wood and metal sculpture contributed much, and had an important function in the life of the people in the last century. Carved wood gulls and ducks provided excellent hunting decoys. A horse or rooster weathervane not only indicated the direction of the wind, but also proclaimed to the world the interest of its owner, who was, more often than not, its designer. Even a ship figurehead, carved in the round, heroically proportioned and titled Hercules, had utility. It balanced the sailing vessel and decorated its prow as well.

The drawings by Index artists, shown alongside these objects, stress once again the high standard of technical skill this Division of the

Project has achieved. This is apparent in the drawings which have caught something of the spirit in which these pieces of folk sculpture were conceived and produced.

In relating the history of America's decorative arts, the Index artists speak an aesthetic language that should be comprehensible and intelligible to the future. These artists are performing a rich service in assuring us that the heritage of our native design will not be lost to artists, designers and social historians of the future. The drawings by Index artists are a legacy to the common man of the future, who will be able to look upon these graphic counterparts of folk art sculpture, long after they have crumbled into dust.

In its search for a usable past, the Index of American Design has uncovered awarding veins of native decorative art, permitted too long to remain in darkness and disuse. Private collections, such as the collection of folk art sculpture at the Downtown Gallery, and public collections have yielded an amazing variety of objects designed in this country from the earliest settlement times up to the turn of the last century. These objects required immediate recording, for, as examples of America's contribution to decorative art, they had historical as well as aesthetic significance.

The furniture, costumes, toys, household objects, glass, pottery, metalware, textiles and sculpture which gathered the dust of neglect in attics or in museum lumber-rooms form the basis for an authoritative study of the organic development of American design. Making these accessible through drawings to the public in general, and to artists and designers in particular, is one way of assuring their availability in the future.

European nations have long ago recognized the

importance of gathering material of this kind into permanent collections of drawings and photographs. But it was only with the inception of the W.P.A. Federal Art Project that even the possibility of making such a record was realized in this country and the Index of American Design was established.

The publication date of the portfolios of Index drawings is still a matter of conjecture. For it seems that the Government, making its first gesture of sponsorship, has yet to follow with another, to assure Index artists that their years of study, production and recreation have not been in vain.

LILLIAN SEMONS.

NEW PROJECT GALLERY OPENS

Finally, after more than two years of exhibitions in "temporary" quarters, the project has opened a genuine, full-fledged art gallery at 225 West 57th Street. In size and appointments it ranks with the best on the street, and, as you know, Fifty-seventh Street is the street of streets. The spacious quarters are lined with two tones of burlap, white and natural brown; specially designed gallery seats are done in white enameled wood with cork tops; fixtures are modern and decorative.

Now the gallerygoer can take in the Federal Art shows in his regular round of the galleries, since the new location is within the orbit of a natural itinerary. Now the Federal Art Project can begin to reach the art-educated public and acquaint it with the really first-rate work done by its artists; now the general public and the labor unions in particular can be contacted and intro-

duced to the art project through the easily accessible gallery.

Beginning its third exhibiting year at the new gallery, the local project recently concluded a showing of watercolors and drawings by artists from the various project divisions. For a large show (there were more than a hundred pieces) the artistic level was extraordinarily high. The petty inhibitions developed on the graphic, easel, mural and sculpture divisions which serve as an inner check to the production of whole-hearted work in a number of cases, seemed to be nowhere in evidence in the more intimate and casual watercolor and drawing media. Less strain, less fussing and more plastic courage made this show a landmark and a fitting opener for the new gallery.

To convince oneself of the general excellence of the exhibition, it may be apropos to recall last season's International of watercolors at the Brooklyn Museum. It's true that some of America's finest practitioners in the medium were absent, but the show nevertheless represented a national selection. Well, no one can convince me that the American section at the Brooklyn exhibition could compare with the recently concluded W.P.A. offering.

For one thing, there was an absolute minimum of stuffed-shirts in the project show, and, as everyone should know, stuffed-shirts are the worst things one can encounter at exhibitions.

—J. K.

"CHANGING NEW YORK" and "U. S. CAMERA"

The United States Camera exhibition publicizing the annual book "U.S. Camera," was showing recently in the new and more spacious quarters of the International Building in Radio City. At the same time the Federal Art Project was holding a special exhibition of Berenice Abbott's photographs entitled "Changing New York" at the Museum of the City of New York.

It is interesting to note the motive behind these two exhibitions. The first, pushed by large advertising concerns, indirectly takes its tone from the taste and needs of its sponsors. The latter, put forth as a Government project to promote an artistic piece of work, gives the photographer a chance to express her own ideas free from the standards of most business concerns.

To the average person the "Camera" exhibit is a record of the best American photography, photographers, and their expression or understanding of modern art trends and technique in the medium. Excellent examples are shown of the advances in photomicrography, the camera in the medical and psychopathic world, and the important improvements in color photography. The prints contributed by the fashion photographers seems to mark them as the advanced group in the commercial field in so far as they show an awareness of the value of abstract and surrealist art. There is a very creditable showing of prints from the International Exhibition of Scientific Applied Photography from Rochester and its technical photographic society. Also the use of aerial topographic maps, the slow motion picture, and research in the Kodak Research Laboratories.

On the other hand, it is rather disappointing to find a group show purporting to be a cross-section of American photography on the whole

so empty of reality. There is a painful contradiction between the sound grasp of the technique of an essentially documentary medium and the nearly complete neglect of the documentary possibilities of that medium. Among the exceptions were prints showed by Silvia Saunders, Orville Logan Snyder, Robert Yarnel Richie and Associated Press Photos of the Chicago Massacre and the Flood.

Berenice Abbott's exhibit is important not only from a historical standpoint as recording the old New York skyline and street scenes, but also as understanding of the subject coupled with a point edge of the medium and a sensitive and artistic understanding of the subject coupled with a point of view towards the transitions of our time. Her eye for the combination of objects evoking ideas such as steel skyscrapers and slums, oversized guns and police stations, the benevolent gesture of a colonial gentleman with the grand splurge of up-to-date advertising, even the titles of some of the photographs and their placement in the exhibition all point to the fact that she is conscious of the way to dramatize and strengthen an idea—not necessarily through a straight record of the scene or through artificial and bizarre lighting, but through playing an object, form, or idea against another in order to create a new meaning. One can see the care taken to extract the best in photographic values—the relationship in tone of people, streets, buildings, etc., the clarity of detail in the light and shade—in order to give as much reality and solidity to the subject. The few photographs taken in Brooklyn are typical examples of its backwardness in the way of slum clearance, etc.

Those who have seen these two exhibitions might be inclined to wonder about the comparative photographic value of the work demanded by American advertising agencies and work under government sponsorship. It is apparent that most photographers are competing through agencies which are not interested in elevating the standard of American taste in art—which, of course, is hardly to be expected con-

sidering their highly competitive manner of reaching the people.

A government-supported project can afford to give the photographer a wider opportunity to use his instrument in a more creative manner and, by placing his finished work before the public, permit him an opportunity to increase the sensitivity of the public to photographic values.

It is to be hoped that, through a continuation and expansion of such projects in the way of reproductions in book form and of wider distribution throughout the country of exhibits the value of these projects can be made even greater.

GENEVIEVE NAYLOR.

CALENDAR

A.C.A.—52 W. 8. Paintings by Joe Jones until Nov. 13. Sculpture by Milton Hebard, winner of the Gallery Competition, Nov. 14-27. Elizabeth Olds, Nov. 27-Dec. 11.

AN AMERICAN PLACE—509 Madison. Beginnings and Landmarks, 291. Through November.

ARTISTS GALLERY—33 W. 8. One-man show by Jennings Tofel until Nov. 15.

ART STUDENTS LEAGUE—215 W. 57. Mural exhibition until Nov. 20. Eleven W.P.A. mural painters are represented.

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY—3 W. 46. Sculpture and drawings by Lehmbruck, and 25 drawings by Modigliani through November.

CONTEMPORARY ARTS—38 W. 57. Nathaniel C. Burwash until Nov. 13. Paintings by Herbert Barnett. Nov. 15-Dec. 4.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, University Hall. Thirty-five artists sponsored by the American Abstract Artists. Through November.



South Street, Manhattan: BERENICE ABBOTT
From "Changing New York" Exhibition, Courtesy Federal Art Project



*Index of Design Exhibit at Downtown Gallery
Photo, Courtesy Federal Art Project*

EAST RIVER GALLERY—358 E. 57. Paintings and drawings by Ben-Zion until Nov. 15. Contemporary American painters, Nov. 15-30.

FINDLAY GALLERIES—8 E. 57. Paintings by Marie Laurencin until Nov. 27.

GEORGETTE PASSEDOIT—121 E. 57. Abstract paintings and sculpture by George L. K. Morris until Nov. 14.

HUDSON WALKER GALLERIES—38 E. 57. Merwin Jules, Baltimore artist now in New York. Until Nov. 20.

JULIEN LEVY—15 E. 57. Portraits by Tchelitchev until Nov. 22.

KLEEMAN GALLERIES—38 E. 57. Recent paintings by Albert Sterner until Nov. 30.

MARIE HARRIMAN GALLERY—61 E. 57. Constable and the Landscape. Through November.

MIDTOWN GALLERIES—605 Madison. Jacob Getlar Smith until Nov. 27.

MORGAN GALLERY—106 E. 57. Paintings by Jean Charlot until Nov. 27.

MUSEUM OF CITY OF NEW YORK—5th Ave. and 103 St. "Changing New York"—photographs by Berenice Abbott executed under the photographic division of the Federal Art Project.

MUSEUM OF LIVING ART (N.Y.U.), 100 Washington Sq. Work by Hans Arp until Nov. 20.

NEW ART CIRCLE (Neumann), 599 Madison. Modern "old masters" paintings until Nov. 27.

NEW SCHOOL—66 W. 12. Paintings by Ann Mantell until Nov. 11. Linoleum cuts by Sid Gotcliffe, Nov. 8-24.

ONYA LA TOUR GALLERY—596 Riverside Drive (137 St.). Various artists represented in owner's collection through November. A group show of New York artists opens Dec. 1.

PIERRE MATISSE GALLERY—51 E. 57. Early work of George Ronault. Nov. 9-Dec. 4.

SELIGMANN GALLERIES—3 E. 51. A loan exhibition of Picasso, 1903-1923, until Nov. 20.

UPTOWN GALLERY—249 West End Ave. Paintings by Charles Harsanyi. Nov. 6-14.

VALENTINE GALLERY—16 E. 57. "Twenty paintings by Picasso through 1937." Until Nov. 27.

WHITNEY MUSEUM—10 W. 8. Annual of Americans, Nov. 10-Dec. 10.

The Estonian Workers Art Circle will exhibit paintings, sculpture, etc., at Scandinavian Hall, Lexington Ave. and 125th St., from November 25 to 29.

At the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, Philadelphia, there is a comprehensive show of Daumier until Dec. 20.

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